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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

Revised estimates under section 26E, Conference services, and section 26F, Administration, Geneva

Conference servicing of the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Report of the Secretary-General

Introduction

1. In paragraph 5 of its decision 14/CP.1 of 7 April 1995, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change requested the General Assembly, bearing in mind the institutional linkage of the Convention secretariat to the United Nations and the large number of States that were parties to the Convention, to finance from the regular budget of the United Nations the conference-servicing costs arising from sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies for the duration of the institutional linkage until the end of 1999 (see FCCC/CP/1995/7/Add.1).

2. In its resolution 50/115 of 20 December 1995, the General Assembly decided to include in the calendar of conferences and meetings for 1996-1997 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies envisaged for that biennium entailing 12 weeks of conference servicing. The Assembly further requested the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements to include in the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 1998-1999 those sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies that the Conference might need to convene in that period.

3. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/716/Add.1) and the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/50/39), the full cost of the 1996 programme of meetings was estimated at $3,522,200. The General

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Assembly decided to consider the actual amount required under section 26E of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, 1/ including the need for an additional appropriation, at its resumed fiftieth session in 1996 on the basis of revised estimates submitted by the Secretary-General (see A/50/823, para. 3). The present report is submitted pursuant to that decision.

4. In its related report (see A/C.5/50/SR.41), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions stated that since the need for an additional appropriation would not be considered by the General Assembly until its resumed fiftieth session, in 1996, work to prepare for meetings during the first quarter of 1996 could be initiated on the understanding that such action should in no way prejudge the decisions to be taken by the Assembly.

5. At the time the statement of programme budget implications was prepared, the programme of meetings had not yet been decided on for 1997 and the Secretariat was not yet in a position to estimate the conference-servicing requirements for that year. The preliminary programme of meetings for 1997 is now available, and it is understood that those meetings will, in principle, be held at Bonn. The Secretary-General is therefore submitting estimates for both 1996 and 1997.

6. The annual programme of meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies would amount to a total of 120 meetings over three two-week periods, for a total of six calendar weeks a year. Interpretation services would be required in all six languages. During each two-week period, a total of 40 meetings would be programmed for the sessions of several bodies meeting simultaneously. The total programme is equivalent to 12 weeks of meetings a year. Details of the sessions are provided in the annex to the present document. The documentation requirements estimated by the Convention secretariat would amount to 2,004 pages a year in the original language, comprising 147 documents.

7. The proposed programme budget for 1996-1997 included provision for meetings not yet approved at the time the programme budget was prepared but which would be added during the course of the biennium, on the assumption that the number and distribution of meetings would be consistent with the pattern of previous years. In the absence of a legislative decision on the part of the General Assembly regarding services to be provided to the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies beyond 31 December 1995, no provision for such conference services was made in the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997. The final expenditures for the biennium 1994-1995 show that actual requirements for temporary assistance for meetings in 1994-1995 ($61,964,100) considerably exceeded the revised appropriation for 1994-1995 ($50,700,000) and the level projected in the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997 ($54,621,800). In view of the pattern of meetings and conference-servicing requirements in 1994-1995, it is expected that any requirements of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies that cannot be absorbed from within permanent capacity would require an additional appropriation and could not be met from within the reduced budgeted resources for temporary assistance in the approved programme budget for 1996-1997.

8. Because of changes to the calendar of conferences during the course of a biennium and the fact that many meetings have dates to be determined, it is difficult to predict with full certainty the actual additional requirements in advance. Furthermore, the exact dates of all sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies have not yet been determined. None the less, on the understanding that sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies will not be scheduled during weeks when permanent capacity is fully utilized for United Nations meetings and taking into account possible overprogramming, it has been assumed that it may be possible to absorb 20 per cent of the interpretation costs.

9. In the case of documentation, however, the total volume of documentation will exceed the permanent capacity. All requirements for translation and text processing will therefore be additional. For meetings at Geneva, the cost of reproduction other than paper costs would be absorbed. Other additional requirements are based on past recruitment patterns.

10. It is understood that the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies will be subject to the rules and regulations established by the General Assembly regarding conference-servicing policy, including the rules and regulations for the control and limitation of documentation.

11. There are also additional requirements relating to the holding of meetings at Bonn in 1997. These include the cost of travel and subsistence of interpreters, who would otherwise have been recruited locally at Geneva. Also, it will be necessary to send supervisory staff and other permanent staff from Geneva or recruit local staff for various services that would have been absorbed if the meetings were held at Geneva. In particular, it will not be possible to absorb reproduction costs for in-session documentation at Bonn.

12. For meetings at Bonn, it is planned to use remote translation and text processing for in-sessional documentation. While there will be some additional costs involved, for example documents control staff will be required both in Geneva and Bonn, it should be noted that there will be no additional travel costs for translation and text processing staff.

13. For meetings at Bonn, it is assumed that the Convention secretariat will provide, with the assistance of the host Government, the necessary conference facilities, including two large meeting rooms equipped for simultaneous interpretation from and into six languages with facilities for recording, office space, office equipment and equipment and facilities for remote translation and reproduction of in-session documentation in six languages.

Resource requirements for 1996-1997

14. The full costs at current rates are estimated at $3,580,600 for 1996 and $4,170,700 for 1997, totalling $7,751,300 for the biennium.

15. The additional requirements (i.e., full costs net of absorbed costs) are estimated at $5,517,000 for the biennium, of which $2,446,200 relates to 1996

and $3,070,800 to 1997. Details of how the estimates were arrived at are provided below.

Temporary assistance for meetings ($4,642,600)

16. Total additional requirements for temporary assistance for meetings are estimated as follows:

	1996	1997	Total
	(United States dollars)		
Interpretation	585 600	546 400	1 132 000
Translation	1 443 200	1 472 100	2 915 300
Text processing	197 500	197 500	395 000
Other	77 300	123 000	200 300
Total	2 303 600	2 339 000	4 642 600

17. Requirements for temporary assistance were estimated based on the number of workdays required to provide the estimated meeting servicing requirements. For interpretation and translation, it was assumed that the existing workload standards are indicative of actual productivity. For text processing, productivity was estimated at an average of approximately 15 pages a day for both original and translated text.

18. The cost per day is based on current salary rates for Geneva and Bonn for short-term staff and take into account the average level of such staff and percentage of non-local staff based on past recruitment. In the absence of experience with recruitment for meetings at Bonn, it was assumed that interpreters would be recruited from Geneva.

Interpretation

19. It is estimated that a total of 1,050 workdays would be required for interpretation services for 120 meetings a year in six languages. Assuming that meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies will not be scheduled at times when permanent capacity is fully utilized and that it is possible to absorb some 20 per cent of the requirements within existing capacity (see para. 8 above), temporary assistance would be required for 840 workdays a year. The costs of travel to Bonn are estimated separately in paragraph 23 below.

Translation and text processing

20. In the case of translation and text processing, it is assumed that all budgeted resources would be utilized for the existing volume of work (i.e., there would be no capacity to absorb within existing resources). In order to translate and revise 2,004 pages of documentation in the original language each year into the other five languages, it is estimated that 2,533 workdays of

temporary assistance would be required. Text processing requirements are estimated at 799 workdays, of which 759 would be provided under temporary assistance for meetings and 40 under overtime (see para. 22 below).

Other

21. Temporary assistance would also be required for two documents distribution clerks ($18,700), four meeting room attendants ($40,300), six sound technicians ($66,200) and two messengers ($20,100). For meetings at Bonn, two additional documents distribution staff ($9,300) would be recruited locally. Provision is also made for 10 locally recruited staff (two shifts) for the reproduction of in-session documentation at Bonn ($45,700). Conference officers, documents control staff, reproduction staff at Geneva, and three documents distribution staff would be provided from within existing capacity.

Overtime ($39,000)

22. The provision for overtime would cover 600 hours of overtime each year for text processing of in-session documentation, documents control, conference officers, documents distribution, sound technicians and messengers.

Travel of conference-servicing staff to meetings ($607,300)

23. Travel requirements for the meetings at Bonn in 1997 are estimated at $607,300. Of the total, $432,500 would cover the cost of travel and subsistence for 42 interpreters (28 for two weeks and 14 for one week), three times a year. An amount of $172,800 would be required to cover the travel and subsistence, also three times a year, of the following 12 staff:

Conference Coordinator
Assistant
Two conference officers
Two documents control clerks
Chief interpreter
Documents reproduction supervisor
Three documents distribution clerks
Technical specialist (remote translation)

Also included is provision for one planning mission to Bonn for five days in connection with remote translation ($2,000).

Operating expenses ($5,100)

24. In 1997, provision is made for freight in connection with the shipment of pre-session documentation to Bonn ($5,100).

25. The Convention secretariat has been asked to provide reproduction facilities at Bonn, and no provision is made for this purpose.

26. It is also assumed that the Convention secretariat will provide the equipment required for remote translation of documentation at Bonn. This equipment is already available at Geneva. In addition, it is assumed that the

Convention secretariat would cover the related communication costs, including installation charges for leased lines to be used in remote translation.

Supplies ($223,000)

27. The cost of reproduction paper for documentation reproduced at Geneva is estimated at $223,000, based on the actual printruns for the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies and the estimated documentation requirements. The total number of page impressions is estimated at 9,058,080 a year, of which 1,812,520 would be for in-session documentation.

Conclusion

28. As indicated above, the full costs at current rates are estimated at $7,751,300. The net additional requirements are estimated at $5,517,000, for which an additional appropriation would be required under sections 26E, Conference services, and 26F, Administration, Geneva, of the programme budget for 1996-1997. The additional requirements are summarized below:

	1996	1997	Total
	(United States dollars)		
Temporary assistance for meetings	2 303 600	2 339 000	4 642 600
Overtime	19 800	19 200	39 000
Travel of staff to meetings	-	607 300	607 300
Freight	-	5 100	5 100
Reproduction paper	122 800	100 200	223 000
Total	2 446 200	3 070 800	5 517 000

29. As indicated above, the costs that can be absorbed ($2,234,300) have already been taken into account. It is anticipated that the approved budgetary resources for conference services in 1996-1997 will be fully utilized for the programme of meetings of United Nations bodies. Therefore, an additional appropriation would be required in the context of the revised appropriation to be approved by the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, in December 1996.

30. It is understood that the additional appropriation would be subject to the provisions of the contingency fund. Under the procedure established by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213, a contingency fund is established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. In resolution 50/216 of 23 December 1995, the General Assembly noted that a balance of $19,427,000 remained in the contingency fund for the biennium 1996-1997. The net amount

available in the contingency fund after making provision of $5,517,000 for servicing the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies would be $13,910,000.

31. Finally, it is proposed that the General Assembly confirm the understanding that meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies will be subject to the same provisions governing the utilization of conference services that apply to United Nations bodies and their secretariats.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/50/6/Rev.1), vol. II.

Annex

Meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its subsidiary bodies in 1996-1997

	Title	Dates, 1996	Number of participants	Number of meetings	Venue
1.	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, second session	26 February-8 March	500	12	Geneva
2.	Subsidiary Body for Implementation, second session	26 February-8 March	500	12	Geneva
3.	Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate, third session	26 February-8 March	500	16	Geneva
4.	Ad Hoc Group on Article 13, second session	8-19 July	300	2	Geneva
5.	Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, second session	8-19 July	1 000	14	Geneva
6.	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, third session	8-19 July	600	7	Geneva
7.	Subsidiary Body for Implementation, third session	8-19 July	600	7	Geneva
8.	Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate, fourth session	8-19 July	600	10	Geneva
9.	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, fourth session	9-20 December	500	16	Geneva
10.	Ad Hoc Group on Article 13, third session	9-20 December	500	8	Geneva
11.	Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate, fifth session	9-20 December	500	16	Geneva
	Total, 1996			120	

	Title	Dates, 1997	Number of participants	Number of meetings	Venue
1.	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, fifth session	24 February-7 March	500	10	Bonn
2.	Subsidiary Body for Implementation, fourth session	24 February-7 March	500	10	Bonn
3.	Ad Hoc Group on Article 13, fourth session	24 February-7 March	500	6	Bonn
4.	Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate, sixth session	24 February-7 March	500	14	Bonn
5.	Ad Hoc Group on Article 13, fifth session	Third quarter	300	6	Bonn
6.	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, sixth session	Third quarter	500	10	Bonn
7.	Subsidiary Body for Implementation, fifth session	Third quarter	500	10	Bonn
8.	Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate, seventh session	Third quarter	500	14	Bonn
9.	Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, third session	Fourth quarter	2 000	14	Bonn
10.	Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate, eighth session	Fourth quarter	800	8	Bonn
11.	Ad Hoc Group on Article 13, sixth session	Fourth quarter	300	4	Bonn
12.	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, seventh session	Fourth quarter	800	7	Bonn
13.	Subsidiary Body for Implementation, sixth session	Fourth quarter	800	7	Bonn
	Total, 1997			120	